

Appl. No. 10/057,608
Amendment dated November 5, 2003
Reply to Office Action of August 6, 2003

Amendments to Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

C1 Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items comprising the steps of:

encoding data including intended recipient identification information on each of a plurality of mail items prior to mailing;

receiving those items of the plurality of mail items that are returned as being undeliverable; and

scanning and processing decoding the encoded data on the items of undeliverable mail, to identify intended recipients having incorrect addresses; and

electronically transferring to the sender information for the identified intended recipients for the sender to update the sender's mailing address files.

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2. (previously amended) The method for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim 1 wherein the step of encoding data includes placing an optically encoded barcode on each of the plurality of mail items.

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1. (original) The method for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim 2' wherein the barcode is a two-dimensional barcode.

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4. (original) The method for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim 3' wherein the two-dimensional barcode is a Portable Data File 417 (PDF417) barcode.

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4. (original) The method for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim 1 further comprising the step of loading the plurality of undeliverable mail items on a transport mechanism for sorting into a plurality of categories.

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5. (original) The method for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim 3' wherein the plurality of categories includes a barcode not decoded category and a barcode decoded successfully category.

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1. (currently amended) The method for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim 1 wherein the step of scanning the encoded data on the undeliverable mail includes reading an optically encoded barcode on each item and decoding the barcode to determine the intended recipient identification information associated with an intended recipient of the item.

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8. (currently amended) The method for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim 6 further comprising the step of generating an output file of the identified intended recipients from the scanned and decoded data in the optically encoded barcode.

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9. (currently amended) The method for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim 8 further comprising the step of transmitting the generated output file to a mailing address service provider in order to obtain a different an updated address for each intended recipient of an undeliverable mail item.

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10. (currently amended) A method for processing returned mail items sent by a subscriber to a recipient, the returned mail items incorporating encoded intended recipient identification information, the method comprising the steps of:

collecting the returned mail items at a processing location;
reading the encoded intended recipient identification information from the returned mail items to identify intended recipients having incorrect addresses;

electronically gathering updated recipient identification information including a different an updated address of the intended recipient; and
electronically transmitting updated recipient identification information to the subscriber for updating of a subscriber's address database.

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20 1. (previously amended) The method for processing returned mail items of claim 16
wherein the encoded information is placed in an optically encoded barcode on each of the
plurality of mail items.

23 20 1. (original) The method for processing returned mail items of claim 1/16 wherein the barcode
is a two-dimensional barcode.

24 23 1. (original) The method for processing returned mail items of claim 1/2 wherein the two-
dimensional barcode is a Portable Data File 417 (PDF417) barcode.

15 14 1. (original) The method for processing returned mail items of claim 16 further comprising
the step of loading the plurality of undeliverable mail items on a transport mechanism for
sorting into a plurality of categories.

16 15 1. (original) The method for processing returned mail items of claim 1/4 wherein the
plurality of categories includes a barcode not decoded category and a barcode decoded
successfully category.

17 14 1. (previously amended) The method for processing returned mail items of claim 16
wherein the step of reading the encoded information includes scanning an optically

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encoded barcode on each item and decoding the barcode to determine identification information associated with the intended recipient of the item.

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17. (currently amended) The method for processing returned mail items of claim 16 further comprising the step of generating an output file of the identified intended recipients from the scanned and decoded data in the optically encoded barcode.

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18. (currently amended) The method for processing returned mail items of claim 17 further comprising the step of transmitting the generated output file to a mailing address service provider in order to obtain an updated a different address for each intended recipient of an undeliverable mail item.

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19. (currently amended) A computer readable medium containing a computer program product comprising instructions for controlling a computer system to process a plurality of undeliverable mail items, the computer program product comprising:

program instructions that capture optically scanned encoded data including intended recipient identification information on each item of undeliverable mail and identify intended recipients having incorrect addresses;

program instructions that store the captured optically scanned and identified intended recipient data in a data file;

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program instructions that update the stored data to incorporate an updated reflect-a
different address of the intended recipient of each item of undeliverable
mail; and

program instructions that transmit the updated intended recipient address
information stored data to a subscriber electronically in electronic form to
update the address files of the subscriber.

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26. (previously amended) The computer program product for controlling a computer system
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to process a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim 19 wherein the encoded data is
placed in an optically encoded barcode on each mail item.

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27. (previously amended) The computer program product for controlling a computer system
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to process a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim 20 wherein the bar code is a
two-dimensional bar code.

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(previously amended) The computer program product for controlling a computer system
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to process a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim 18 wherein the encoded
identification information includes a name and current address associated with the
intended recipient of the mail item.

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26. (currently amended) The computer program product for controlling a computer system to process a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim *10* further comprising program instructions that transmit the stored data file electronically to a mailing address service provider in order to obtain ~~a different~~ an updated address for each intended recipient of an undeliverable mail item.

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24. (currently amended) A system for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items comprising:

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a scanner for reading optically encoded data that includes intended recipient identification information on each item of undeliverable mail;

a processor for operation of a computer program for capturing decoding the scanned data, identifying the intended recipient identification information in the encoded decoded data, and writing the identified recipient identification information into a data file, and transferring to a sender information for the identified intended recipient for the sender to update the sender's mailing address files; and

a database for storing the data file containing identified recipient identification information.

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25. (currently amended) The system for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim *24* wherein the computer program includes instructions that update the stored data

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in the data file with a different an updated address associated with each of the intended recipients of the undeliverable mail items.

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26. (currently amended) The system for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items of
claim 24 ³⁷ wherein the computer program includes instructions that deliver the updated
address stored data to a subscriber in electronic form for use in updating the address files
for the intended recipients of the subscriber.

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27. (previously amended) The system for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items
of claim 24 ³³ wherein the optically encoded data contains a two-dimensional bar code.

28.

- (currently amended) The method for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items of
claim 1, ~~wherein the step of processing encoded data comprises-~~ further comprising the
steps of:

storing the ~~encoded~~ decoded data in a data file;

updating the stored data to correct the address of each intended recipient of the
items of undeliverable mail; and

delivering the updated data to a subscriber electronically for use in updating the
mailing address files of the subscriber.

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29. (currently amended) The method for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim 1, wherein the recipient identification information encoded on each mail item includes a name and current an address associated with an intended recipient of the mail item.

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30. (previously added) The method for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim 29, wherein the optically encoded bar code is placed on either the front side or the back side of each mail item.

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31. (previously added) The method for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim 29, wherein the optically encoded bar code is placed in a return address section on each of the plurality of mail items.

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32. (previously added) The method for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim 20, wherein the optically encoded bar code is placed on either the front side or the back side of each mail item.

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33. (previously added) The method for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim 29, wherein the optically encoded bar code is placed in a return address section on each of the plurality of mail items.

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34. (currently amended) The method for processing computer program product for controlling a computer system to process a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim

28 30, wherein the optically encoded bar code is placed on either the front side or the back side of each mail item.

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36. (currently amended) The method for processing computer program product for controlling a computer system to process a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim

28 30, wherein the optically encoded bar code is placed in a return address section on each of the plurality of mail items.

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36. (previously added) The system for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim 32, further comprising a mail transport device for conveying the plurality of undeliverable items and sorting the undeliverable mail items into a plurality of bins.

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37. (previously added) The system for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim 32, wherein the scanner is a hand-held device.

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38. (previously added) The system for processing a plurality of undeliverable mail items of claim 32, wherin the scanner is a mixed media optical character recognition (MLOCR) device.